



NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Nick Archuleta
President
North Dakota United
Phone: 701-223-0450 or 1-800-369-6332
E-mail: nick.archuleta@ndunited.org

North Dakota United Disagrees with Partisan Attack on Reading

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Republican Party recently sent out a political mailer to District 42 voters in Grand Forks, targeting Rep. Kylie Oversen. In this piece, the party takes a number of questionable shots at Oversen’s character and her policy positions. Our association disagrees with the content of this mailer, as Rep. Oversen has been endorsed for re-election by the members of North Dakota United. In particular, NDU disagrees with the decision by the Republican Party to use a picture of Rep. Oversen wearing a hat like that worn by the title character of the Dr. Seuss classic children’s story, “The Cat in the Hat.”

For the past 18 years, members of NDU and our national affiliate, the National Education Association (NEA), have celebrated the birthday of Dr. Seuss by commemorating Read Across America Day, which is held every year on March 2. NEA members, along with parents, caregivers and children, host events in cities across the United States, promoting the importance of reading to our students.

Teachers, teenagers, librarians, actors, athletes, parents, grandparents and, yes, even politicians, participate in Read Across America activities in order to share the love of reading with children of all ages.

Because March 2 coincides with the North Dakota Legislative Assembly every other year, North Dakota United has used this annual event as an opportunity to bring legislators from of all political persuasions together to Read Across America in the halls of our state Capitol. The picture of Rep. Oversen wearing a “Cat in the Hat” style of hat was taken during a Read Across America event at the state Legislature, sponsored by North Dakota United.

(more)

301 N. Fourth St., Bismarck, ND 58501
Phone: 701-223-0450 or 800-369-6332
E-mail: comments@ndunited.org Visit us online at www.ndunited.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ndunited Twitter: www.twitter.com/ndunited

“Reading to children is not a partisan issue,” said NDU President Nick Archuleta. “Reading is the foundation upon which is built a solid academic experience. It is also a great deal of fun, and Read Across America is one way to stress the importance of reading to all our students.”

“Lawmakers from both parties, including Rep. Oversen and House Majority Leader Al Carlson have all proudly donned their Dr. Seuss hats in session at the Capitol, in order to show our children just how important it is to keep reading on our calendars, 365 days a year,” Archuleta said. “We applaud Kylie Oversen and all legislators for participating in this important program. As we like to say at NDU and NEA, ‘You’re never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read with a child.’”

Instilling a lifelong love of reading is an important factor in student achievement and personal enrichment. Research has shown that children who are motivated and spend more time reading do better in school. Whether it was intentional or not, this partisan advertisement sends a negative message about the importance of reading to children.

The 11,500 members of North Dakota United understand political gamesmanship. They also understand that messages which attempt to ridicule candidates who promote basic and necessary learning skills is out of bounds and has no place in our political discourse. No matter what party is doing it, trying to make political hay over someone participating in reading to children is wrong.

For more information about NEA’s Read Across America, visit www.nea.org/readacross, or take the Read Across Pledge at www.readacrossamerica.org.

North Dakota United is the largest professional organization of public educators and employees in the state, representing more than 11,000 public school teachers, school staff, university faculty and staff, and city, county and state employees. Our association represents members in the state Capitol, the Legislature, in schools, on college campuses and at worksites across the state, and in our communities, promoting the great public education and great public services that the citizens of North Dakota deserve.

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